

Buddhism

Chapter One: Buddha the Enlightened One

Inside Buddhism, Milliken Publishing Co. pg 2-3.

Origins

- Buddhism traces its origins back some 2500 years ago to India
- Began around 563 BC - birth of Siddhartha Gautama
- He would eventually become the Buddha (the Enlightened One)
- Led a life of meditation and poverty

Prince Siddhartha

- Siddhartha's parents were King Shuddhodana and Queen Maya.
- Legend says that he was born by springing from his mother's side after a white elephant painlessly entered the side of his mother.
- Took seven steps at birth and declared that he was born to achieve bodhi (awakening).
- King was the rajah (ruler) of a small Hindu kingdom located at the foothills of the Himalayas.

- Sage said that Siddhartha had wheels on the palms of his hands and feet.
- He was destined to be a “Wheel Turner” (Chakravarta)
- Sages talked about Four Sights that would cause young Siddhartha to give up a life of worldly pleasures and lead a life of religious privation.
- Four Sights - old man, sick man, dead man, and a monk.
- The king decided to protect his son from seeing suffering, pain or death.

- Had four palaces built
 - winter palace
 - summer palace
 - rainy season palace
- Each palace consisted of parks, gardens and ponds.
 - swans swam among lotuses (lily)
 - the lotus would later become a symbol of Buddhism.
- Siddhartha led an unhappy life living the life of luxury

- When Siddhartha turned 16 his father decided it was time for him to marry. He selected Yasodhara to become his wife.
- Yasodhara was the daughter of a chieftain named Dandapani.
- Siddhartha and his wife lived a charmed life for the first 13 years of their life. His father made sure that Siddhartha never saw a person who was old or sick. He never saw anyone die nor witnesses a funeral. He had no ideas about what went on outside of the palace.
- Siddhartha decided to see what was outside the palaces